



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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## DETECTOR DOG SNIFFS OUT THREAT TO COUNTY'S CITRUS INDUSTRY *Dog Finds Illegal Citrus Shipment*

The County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures recently seized 10 Kaffir lime trees from Florida after detector dog *Drake* discovered them in an unmarked box at a North County commercial shipping terminal.

Detector dog *Drake* and his handler, Ted Olsen, found the shipment two weeks ago during a routine inspection of packages coming into San Diego County. Each tree had leaves, roots and soil which increase the potential for pests to be present. The shipment was in violation of federal domestic quarantines that guard against the importation of plants that may carry certain agricultural threats. Those include citrus canker, citrus greening and the Asian citrus psyllid, imported fire ant, citrus black spot, and sweet orange scab. Quarantine violations against burrowing and reniform nematodes and other citrus pests were also cited in the case. If introduced into local agriculture, any one of these pests could have a serious impact on San Diego County's \$78.5 million citrus industry.

"Kaffir lime from the state of Florida is prohibited," said County Agricultural Commissioner Lisa Leondis, "This one shipment of trees violated seven different quarantine requirements, and is a perfect example of how valuable our detector dogs are in protecting the County's \$1.652 billion agriculture industry."

San Diego County has two United States Department of Agriculture-trained detector dog teams that are part of a statewide network of 13 teams coordinated by the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Our first team, Jeremy Partch and *Friday*, came on board in January, 2009 followed by Ted Olsen and *Drake* in January, 2010. Last year, the two teams inspected 10,571 marked packages and found 747 unmarked packages containing fruit, plants and live animals. Unmarked packages of illegal plants and certain live animals represent a route of entry for unwanted, damaging pests.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture are handling the investigation regarding the origin and intended destination of the shipment. After testing for other pests, the trees will ultimately be destroyed.

For more information about the County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures and its role in protecting county agriculture, visit our website at [www.sdcountry.ca.gov/awm](http://www.sdcountry.ca.gov/awm). To see a detector dog in action, watch this video produced by the County Television Network, [The Nose Knows](#).

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